



Thank you, Chairman Lund and members of the committee.

The Michigan Nonprofit Association (MNA) opposes SB 751, SB 754, and SB 803, however, my testimony will focus on SB 754.

The integrity of the voting system is paramount to the legitimacy of our democratic process. MNA supports, smart, efficient reforms to our voter registration system. Reforms which would actually ensure all who are eligible to vote will be able to cast a ballot and have confidence that their vote will count.

MNA and many of our members register and educate under-represented voters. These are voters who are elderly, disabled, young, and newly eligible voters. We do this hard work because 1) we believe that nonprofits play a critical role in promoting and being a leader in civic engagement and 2) as a recent report released by the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, National Conference on Citizenship, and a host of other organizations found, there is a very strong correlation between civic participation (voting, registering voters, and other forms of civic engagement) leads to stronger communities and vibrant economies. The report is in front of you.

SB 754 would have a chilling effect on nonprofits playing a role in American the most basic of civic functions, registering new voters and educating them. The unnecessary red tape proposed in SB 754 would have a chilling effect on many organizations who serve under-represented populations or faith-based and community-based nonprofits. These organizations know that empowering their clients by engaging them in civil society ensures stronger families and communities. However, the regulations create unnecessary burden on organizations that want to engage in nonpartisan voter registration.

We fully appreciate the difficult job clerks and the Secretary of State has in ensuring that all newly registered voters are entered into the voter rolls before Election Day. That is why, instead of codifying unnecessary regulations, we want to work with the clerks and SoS to educate nonprofits about how to turn voter registration forms back into clerks in a timely manner. MNA has a strong track record of partnering with government agencies to achieve efficiencies and accountability, while not adding unnecessary regulatory burdens to nonprofits.

We currently work with the Charitable Trust section of the Attorney General's office to ensure that Michigan nonprofits are held to the highest expectation of transparency and accountability and bad actors are dealt with. We are also partnering with the Liquor Control Commission to ensure that nonprofits seeking temporary liquor licenses do so according the regulations and in a timely manner.

MNA would like to work with the Bureau of Elections to achieve the same results as our work with other government agencies, of educating nonprofits on best practices so that they can engage their clients and communities in democracy. That way we can work



together to increase the depressed voter turnout in 2010 – 44% of registered voters in Michigan and to ensure that all eligible voters are properly registered and can cast a ballot with full confidence that their votes will be counted.